

August Reflection for EDL590

Reflection Questions for August:

The staff is rested and ready for a great year. We have reviewed our policies and procedures for the year. In June the teachers began to communicate with the next teachers about their incoming students. I hope that the teachers have reflected on their successes and the things that didn't go so well for the next year. When the next school year comes to a close we need to have a handle on the common core implementation. The training sessions that we had last year, the in-service training that we are going to do this week, and the many conversations that we have and will be having should have us at the point of a full implementation of the common core by next May. Three measurable goals for the year include: the school's reading goal for all students, the implementation of the literacy standards at all grade levels and in all curricular areas for the common core, and the implementation of the writing standards for all curricular areas affected by the common core. We will measure these by the feedback from staff in training, and by the honest reporting on lesson plans.

The second question of the reflection is cut off. I'm not sure what is being asked.

One positive thing that happened at the end of last year was the hiring of some new staff. These people replaced some outgoing staff who were the "good enough" type of people; a history teacher who had been teaching from the same lecture notes for over thirty years and a staff member who was not a positive role model for students. The new staff seems energetic, positive, and ready to buy-in (I hope). The concern is that we may overwhelm them with too much and not provide enough support. The willingness on the part of other staff members to collaborate and welcome these new members will help them. The freshness and energy of the new teachers could help motivate us all.

Last year we began a more concerted effort to give recognition for academic achievement at the end of the year for students. This effort was spear headed by our new superintendent. I'm hoping that other teachers may buy-in this year and expand this program. Students are constantly recognize for athletic achievement (not a bad thing); we just need to promote the effort to recognize academic achievement more as a staff. Also, at the same time, more effort was put into recognizing the efforts that teachers make when they go beyond. For the first time in a long time, teachers and other staff were awarded certificates and thanked publicly for their service. We also have restarted teacher appreciation week. Teachers and other staff found little thank you incentives daily, like notes and chocolate. Nothing says, "You're appreciated!" like chocolate. These are all things which don't require a huge budget, but help create a climate of cooperation.

The leadership team at the school? Well, we have a superintendent/principal who is one person, and a part time athletic director who is also the sixth grade teacher this year. The biggest uncertainties, again, lie in the implementation of the common core. Our superintendent has provide us with guidance, and we have the opportunity to work with and see the changes. I think that through out the year we need to have an ongoing conversation about the literacy, reading, and math expectations, allowing ourselves time to reflect together as a group on the changes. We need to listen to what the teachers are telling us they need in order to make things happen. We have a great staff, and our students are making excellent progress. Instead of completely turning the ship in another direction, we only need to make some course corrections and keep on the path of excellence.